

Point of ORIGIN

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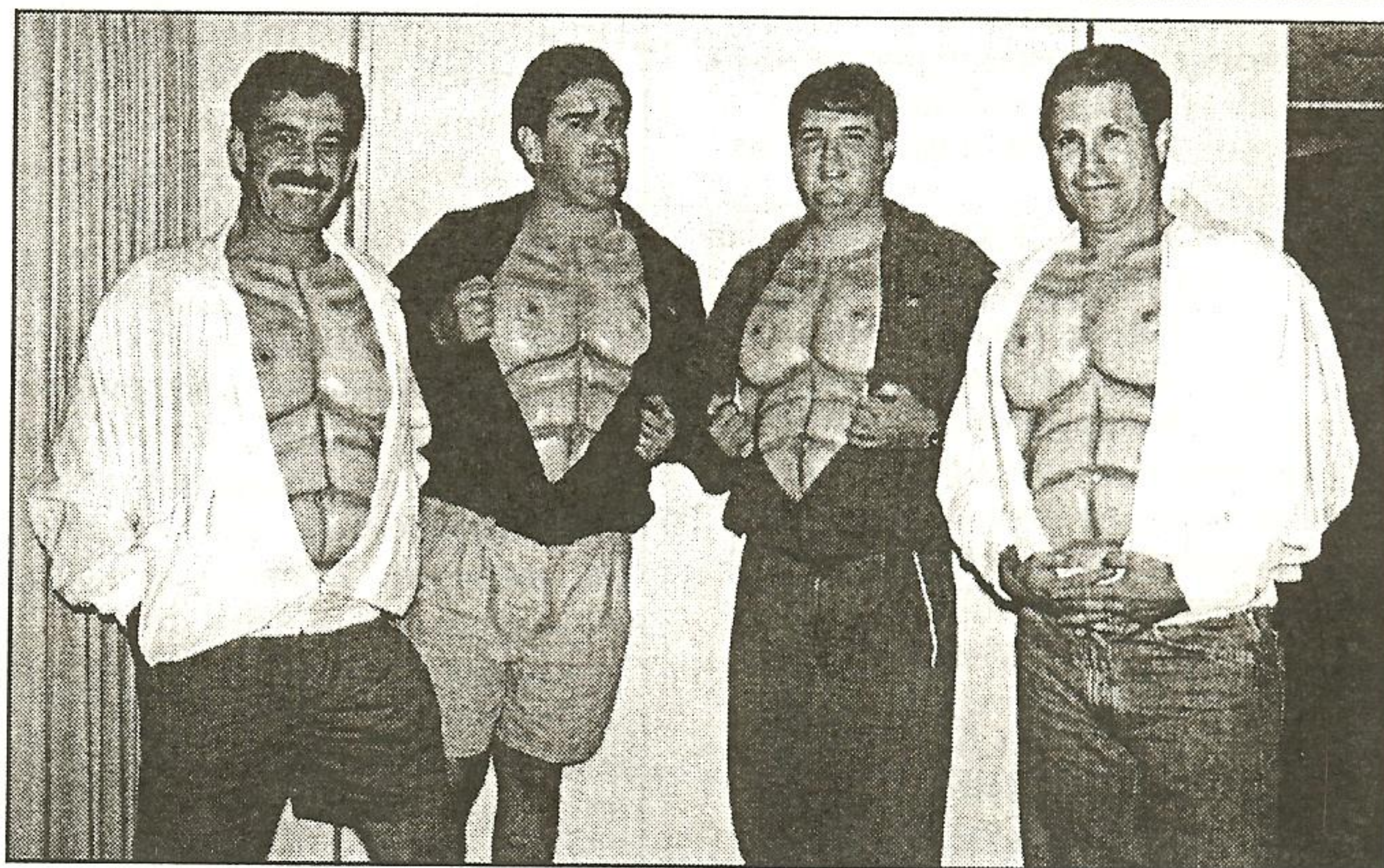
Austin, TX



Two weeks ago, Marten Davies, Lee Moore, Galen Svanas and I were at EA headquarters for the quarterly sales meeting. There, the EA sales force is presented with all products that are shipping during the upcoming quarter.

Once again, ORIGIN came away the clear winner of the most creative and fun presentation. ORIGIN's slated time to present was at 8:30 in the morning so, as you can guess, most of the attendees were half asleep, *but* not for long. The ORIGIN theme was "Pump up the Volume (of sales in the channel)." From the moment we entered the auditorium wearing tank tops with fake muscular chests and posing to the music of James Brown, the EA sales force was wide awake!

We equipped each sales person with his/her own tank top with the phrase, "Pump Up the Volume" on the back, a three-pound dumbbell, a water bottle and a tube of BEN GAY (to rub on wrists which will undoubtedly be tired from writing so many ORIGIN orders during the upcoming quarter). Throughout the event, we had the EA people yelling and clapping and generally raising hell. They were definitely ready to sell our



Brutal strength...

Marten Davies, Galen Svanas, Lee Moore and Karl Kabler get pumped up for the EA Sales Force.

products. We left them wondering what we were going to do for the next meeting in December.

Over the past couple of weeks, Lee and I have been to the Software Etc. annual managers' show. This show is held in Denver and its purpose is to give all stores managers a sneak preview to the upcoming releases for Christmas.

Software Etc. is one of our largest retailers with roughly 280 stores and projected to grow to 350 stores by the end of 1994. Lee and I did 31 separate 20-minute presentations over a day and half in an ORIGIN meeting room. We completely blasted their socks off with Shadowcaster and Ultima 8. In fact, we were so successful that Chuck Whitaker, the Software Etc. buyer,

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NEWS.TXT

STRIKE COMMANDER IS OUT THERE WAITING: A new survey says more than 70 million people in the U.S. now use personal computers at home and/or at work, spending an average of 17 hours weekly at their keyboards. The research, by TechScan Inc.'s 2-year-old "PC Watch Service," also suggests the average computer user is 35 to 44 years old and earns between \$39,000 and \$75,000 a year. According to the survey, the installed base for entertainment/games has increased 12 percent in the past nine months.

PRICE CHECK ON SLAB 5: Bar codes, which have become a fact of life, may soon be a fact of death, too. In Miami, the Dade County Medical Examiner has begun a trial run of bar-coded toe tags to identify corpses, a system similar to one already in use in Los Angeles. Scott J. Hanks, forensic morgue supervisor, told the Associated Press, "We have scanners just like Home Depot."

IF WE'D ONLY KNOWN, WE COULD HAVE ENTERED: Scott Garcia and Robert Cuenca, two software engineers, won the \$250 grand prize in the annual Useless Software Contest in San Diego. Their creation—"Flying Toilets," a screen saver program which features newspaper-reading cows on the ubiquitous porcelain throne of contemplation. It's Garcia's and Cuenca's sequel to last year's winner, "Bungie Cows," a screen saver program that has cows on elastic cords jumping down into your computer screen, then springing back up, wiping off the screen image as they go. A runner-up in the graphics category was a program called "Sniff," a software program that claims to detect bad breath when the user breathes into the opening of the computer's disk drive.



Pulse Check

Outer space is back with a vengeance. Privateer blew off of the shelves its first weekend, moving 6700 units domestically. Sales are brisk in Europe as well. Backorders are already coming in and the Sales Department hopes to see some major reorders this week. In fact, the Sales Team thinks Privateer could go "gold" if the momentum keeps up.

From a Product Support standpoint, the Privateer calls have been pretty good. "Basically, all we're getting are calls on joystick calibration problems and IRQ conflicts," according to Kay Gilmore. "We're also getting some plot calls now that people are getting into the game." If there's been any criticism to date, it's that drug smuggling is plot critical in one part of the game; players online are suggesting there should be an option around it. Total PS calls (9/28-10/4): 379.

Meanwhile, Wing Academy is holding its own, although sales are

slowing. No word back yet on Tactical Ops. The savegame problem has been fixed and a patch is being offered through Product Support and on the bulletin boards. A special promotion for Strike Commander went into effect last Tuesday, dropping the price to \$59.95. Karl Kabler says it will take about another week before we have a barometer as to how it is affecting sales. Total Strike PS calls: 275.

On the horizon—Shadowcaster's down to one bug and could sign off today. U8's still on tap for mid to late December. The Pacific Strike crew hopes to be Alpha this week, with signoff at the end of November. Super Wing/3DO has missions and is playable. The plan there is to sign off at the end of November.

You may start to hear a lot of talk about SSI around here. That's because EA (which has a 20% ownership in SSI) has decided that the ORIGIN Sales Force is the best qualified to sell SSI's products. ORIGIN will sell SSI games to our 15 biggest customers—just as we do with our own titles—while EA covers the rest.



HR Puff and Stuff

First of all, a hearty welcome to **Francine Gertz**, our new Human Resources Manager. Francine capped off the last 5 years at Coca Cola and she's also been with the city of Austin and U.T.

While we're on the subject of new faces, you may remember **Mademoiselle Betty Peltier** from our U7/French days. She's back to translate U8 for the Frogs. And **Richard Lane** comes aboard as a Product Support Specialist (great title). Heading for the proverbial "greener pastures" this Friday: **Jeff Wilson**, **Susan Hustace** and **Tom Evans**. Already out to pasture: **Bill Narum**, **Miles Lewis**, **Jason Smith**, **Mark Schaeffen** and **Gilbert Pena**.

Two notable anniversaries have just passed. On September 19, **Glen Johnson** hit the 5-year mark with ORIGIN, and on October 7, **Jeff Hillhouse** officially became a decadent (10 years).

If you're the type to mark calendars, jot down the Company Dinner on December 11 at the Hyatt, and don't forget the Kids' Party December 4, right here at ORIGIN.

Finally, Family Badge Day(s) are this week; on Wednesday, October 13, from 5:30-7:00 p.m., and on Thursday, October 14, from 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Pictures will be taken for spouses/significant others so they won't have to constantly sign in as visitors and guests.

Dear Point Man,

Dear Point Man,

Where are all the people moving to within the building and how can I find them all? What's with the numbers on the doorways?

Signed,
Dazed and Confused

Dear Dazed,

Ahhh, it's that time of year again: there's a nip in the air, the leaves are turning and the teams are dissolving. As Privateer and Tac Ops signed off, their resources were sent packing to new projects. The new numbers are an effort to describe offices in phrases other than: "You know the coffee machine by the couch on the second floor? I'm three doors down from that toward Warren's office." They also help in matching locks to offices and zeroing in on maintenance requests.

The HR Department has been trying to put together a new map with people's names and offices, but by the time Sharon makes it to the copier, the personnel landscape has changed again. When things settle a bit more, we'll try to pass along the map with an issue of Point. Because as we all know, people are temporary, but numbers are forever.

Dear Point Man,

Since the German market turns out to be so huge, why did we get rid of our internal translation department that got us such great press overseas? Is this doing market research?

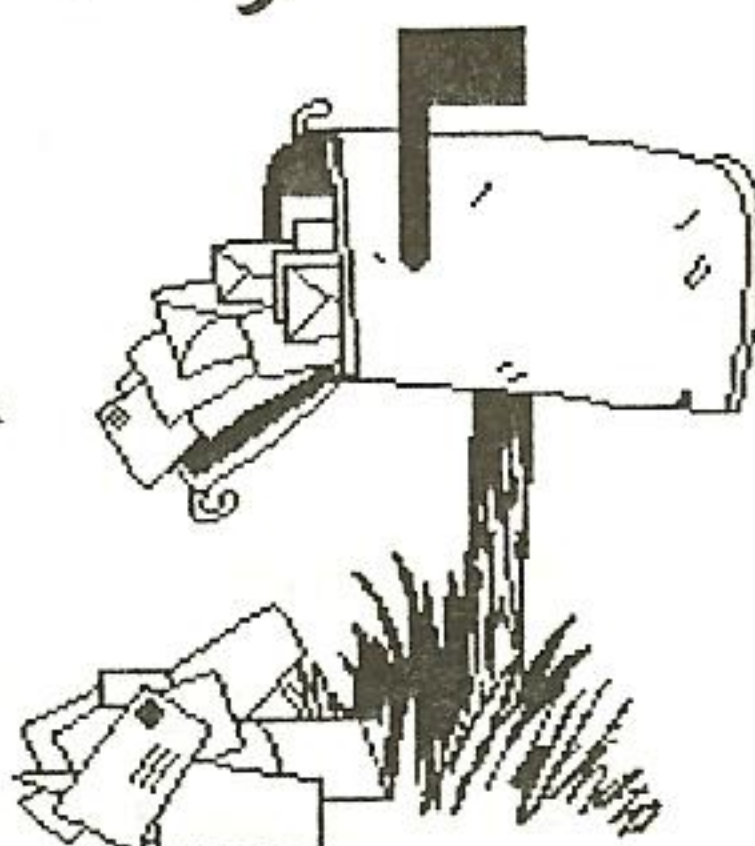
Now I hear that we've decided to start doing internal translations again! If this is true, is this thinking ahead? Is this planning for the future?

Signed,
Non-Ethnocentric

Dear Non,

Sheez! Around here you're damned if you don't and damned if you do. You basically answered your own question. Now that the European market is exploding, it has the capacity to meet and even exceed the U.S. That's precisely why we've called

back in the crack translators (that, and a commitment from EAUk to take about 35,000 units in foreign languages). So right now, we're doing French and German again in-house on an ongoing trial basis.



Dear Point Man,

What is it with the temperature in this building? The intense heat from my office met a cold front near the copying machine and it rained! Are we supposed to be adjusting the thermostats?

Signed,
Tropically Depressed

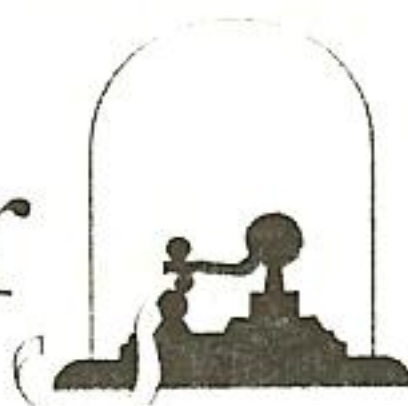
Dear Depressed,

According to Jeff Hillhouse, there was a power outage over the weekend that trips a switch in our air conditioners. At last count, there were seven separate units that needed resetting. Repair people have been called and more comfortable climes should be returning soon.

The Point letters are getting sparse. Does that mean everything's rosy and you don't have any questions? (Yeah, right.)

It's easy. Ask the Point Man via e-mail to the "Point of ORIGIN" address, or by prehistoric pen and paper in the soon-to-be-locked again Point of ORIGIN mailbox on the first floor. And, just like Penthouse, names are withheld by request.

Ticker



The latest from Wall
Street at press time (2:00 pm).

ERTS	38.750	+2.125
THDO4	1.750	+1.750
MPRS	13.125	+1.750
SIER	18.750	+0.500
BROD	52.000	+1.875

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Start the Presses

Once again, it's the quiet before the storm. Reviews should start pouring in soon for Tac Ops and Privateer. Meanwhile, ORIGIN's been showing up in different ways in different places.

Egghead puts out a regular newsletter called Cue to about a gazillion of its customers every month. In a wrap-up of flight sims, Cue says Wing Academy is "as thrilling for flight jocks as fantasy game fans."

One of the most bizarre, back-handed complimentary reviews we've ever run across is in the current issue of PC Games. In his look at Wing Academy, Cameron Crotty laments the loss of "waiting to see what your next mission is, no more battles against impossible odds, no more clicking endlessly through useless and occasionally ham-fisted plot scenes. Heaven, right? Maybe, maybe not." Crotty says Academy is a lot of fun, but he misses Hobbes and Angel and the rest of the Wing universe. He says games like Wing and Strike "blend adventure and action into an unbeatable combo."

In the same issue, Bernie Yee takes a look at the evolution of FRPs, paying proper homage to Ultima and echoing some reflections from Lord British. The icing on the cake, though, is the 16-screen strip with every Ultima represented, right up to Pyros in U8.

Strategy Plus has a nice preview of Privateer in the November issue. Bill Johnson gives a pretty straightforward description of the plot and options, punctuated by big, colorful screen shots. He wraps up with: "Decisions, decisions. At least this time, you're the one who gets to make them."

Didier Latil from Generation 4 (France) and Mark Deltz from Strategy Plus are slated to hit Austin the first week of November. They'll be making the producer and demo rounds. Didier's story will be in Gen

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...Road

Continued from page 1

told us that we completely stole the show and the response from his store managers was very positive. So positive that Chuck upped his order on Shadowcaster to 3,000 units from 2,200. (Way to up, Chuck!)

Ultima 8, with its new interface and larger characters, was definitely a crowd pleaser. All store managers gave a thumbs-up for the addition of the Speech Pack, a welcomed addition to the FRP genre.

In addition, Privater has vaulted out of the gates with the top five retailers sellings around 6,000 units the first week. Reorders from Babbages are already in. We'll keep you up to date with everything happening on the road.

...Presses

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4's December issue; Mark's profile should hit in March.

In the consumer press—travelers around the world will be reading about ORIGIN in the October 15 issue of American Way, American Airlines' in-flight magazine. Austin-based Joe Nick Patoski (who also writes for Texas Monthly) penned the piece. And later this month, ORIGIN will figure prominently in an article about Austin in Fortune magazine. Again this year, Austin has been cited as one of the best 10 cities in America for doing business, and ORIGIN is the featured company located here.

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Bucks per Bodies

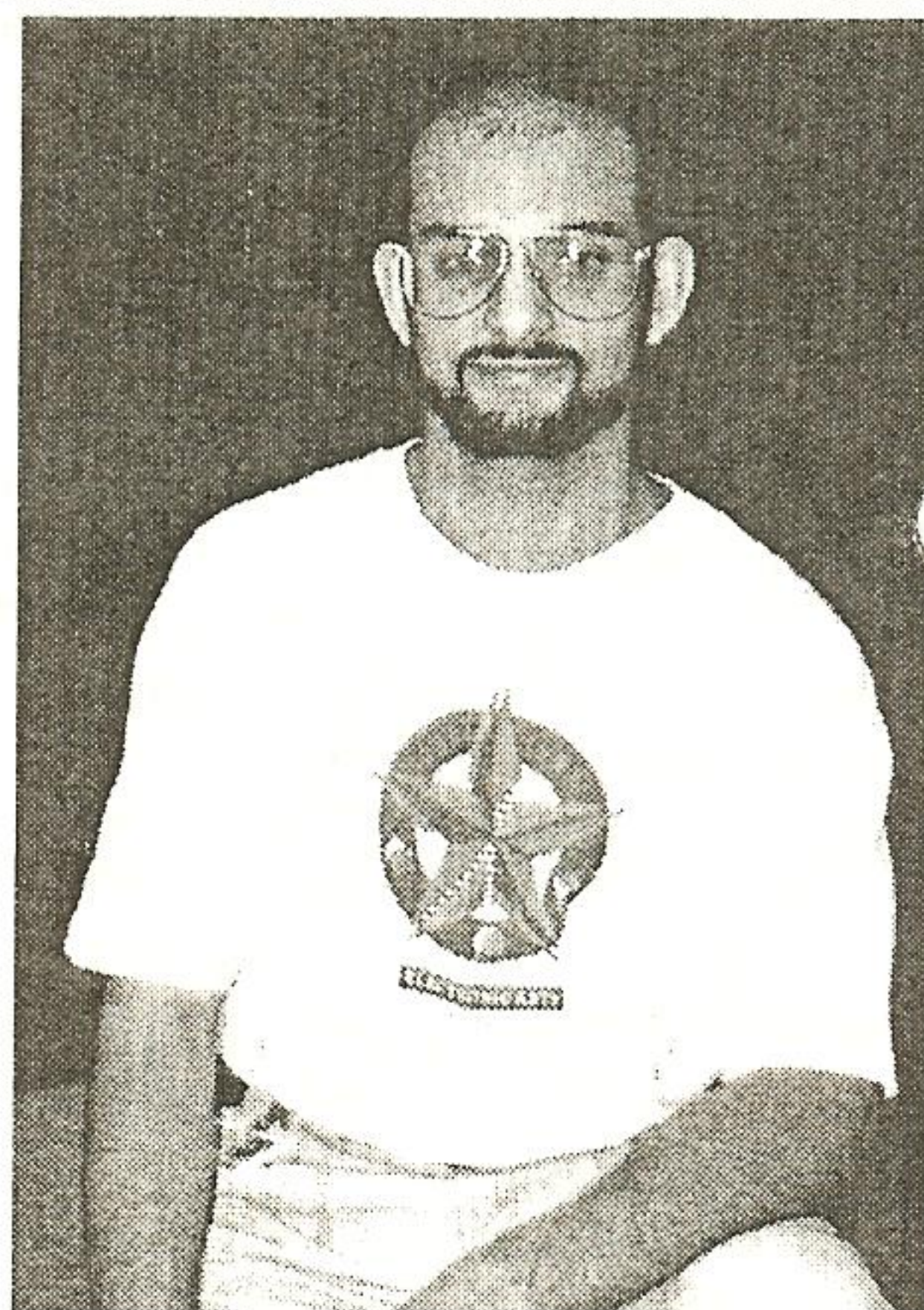
Top software developers in sales per employee—Q1 '93 vs. Q1 '92.

	1992	1993	% Change
Acclaim	\$431,719	\$431,672	0.0
Electronic Arts	104,801	100,326	-4.3
Software Toolworks	74,029	88,914	20.1
Meca Software	42,670	82,829	94.1
Novell	69,529	77,472	11.4
(8) Microsoft	64,857	73,692	13.6
(9) Broderbund.	66,600	67,741	1.7
(37) Sierra On-Line	20,589	21,765	5.7

Employee of the Month

Prem Krishnan is our employee of the month for October. Prem was hired way back in January of 1992 and has worked on Serpent Isle, the short-lived Arthurian Legends, Strike Commander, the Strike CD and Tactical Operations. He joined ORIGIN straight out of U.T. where he received a Bachelors of Liberal Arts in English with a minor in German.

Prem credits his success at ORIGIN to the fact that he is—cover your ears—organized. He says he is good at scheduling and he "knows how to do a little of everything." Prem says some people have called him a pack-rat, but he counters that he always seems to have what they need at the time, whether it's a telephone operation manual or helpful instructions from the ORIGIN U's/Zach Simpson's C++ class. Prem says that taking Zach's course "was one of the best things I could have done." With the engineering



Prem Krishnan

classes, math always held him back, but Prem says Zach helped him to get past it. Prem continues to help Zach with the labs when in session.

Prem is currently an Assistant Producer and will hopefully be with ORIGIN for years to come. Kudos and parking places!

In the next Point: our gala Halloween issue!